

^{John} Mr. ⁶ L A C Y ' S
^K LETTER

To the Reverend

Dr. JOSIAH WOODWARD,

Concerning his

REMARKS

ON THE

Modern Prophets.

L O N D O N ;

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To the Right

DR. JOSEPH WOODWARD
C. 1840

REMAINS



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Mr. LACY's Letter

To the Reverend

Dr. Josiah Woodward, &c.

I Think my self bound to acknowledg, with Thankfulness, your Candor, in saying, p. 58 touching the present Prophets and their Adherents : *The Intentions of many of them were, I verily think, honest and good, and therefore we ought to restore them in the Spirit of Meekness, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted.* And, p. 9. *Those Gentlemen among them are, I verily think, Persons of greater Piety and Honor, than to remain in wilful Errors in so dangerous a point, or to combine in any known Imposture, to serve any worldly or ill end.* As to Cheat, Counterfeit and Imposture, the World can bear witness for us, that tho there have not wanted Eyes vigilant, jealous and malicious enough ; yet after a full Year's being expos'd to all Observation, nothing of that kind, at least that I know of, has been found upon us. The Charge of blasphemously speaking of our selves in the Person of God, is so heinous, that whoever is guilty of it undoubtedly deserves to die ; but that the Innocent shou'd perish as the Guilty, God forbid : where the influence of a foreign Agent is apparent, there it cannot be justly said, A Man speaks merely of himself, or presumptuously.

I have more than once, with the most awful Solemnity, declar'd and publish'd in Print, that in the times of my Ecstasy, I am under the Agency of a-

nother distinct Being ; for further Assurance of my Sincerity in which Declaration, and in that which here ensues, I have lately appeal'd to God, at the Lord's Table. In pag. 45. I take notice, that you allow the Agency of a superior Power on us ; not only from what I have testify'd touching my self, but *from several other Instances, attested to you by credible Witnesses, of things done by the Prophets, which seem'd plainly to exceed the Sphere of human Efficiency.* Which Matter has, no doubt, been satisfactorily apparent to many hundred Spectators, and may be sufficiently witness'd by a multitude of Persons, who have upon them the Influence of that independent over-ruling Agent : And surely there is and may be as much obvious Proof, in this point, as the nature of the thing can admit of.

The Case being such, we proceed to enquire into the quality of that Spirit, which has over-rul'd many of late to speak in the Person of God, as the antient Prophets of the Old Testament did : In which Enquiry, as the Scripture ought to be our only Guide, we find therein, on the one hand, our blessed Saviour himself tax'd with having a Devil ; and on the other, the Devil is said sometimes to transform himself into the Likeness of an Angel of Light. No true Disciple of our Lord shou'd repine, if he the Servant be not treated better by the World, than his great Master ; but ought (being innocent, and justify'd before God in his Conscience) patiently to bear with the like Imputation, as was charg'd upon him, yea even and rejoice in it. As to the former Text, that the Devil sometimes transforms himself into the Likeness of an Angel of Light, it does not at all point out and demonstrate the Case, or the Person in whom he does so ; we are left to enquire into other Scriptures for a definition of that. And tho you are pleas'd, Sir, to apply it unto us, you have added, p. 51. *That perhaps he scarce ever acted that part more exquisitely than in this Case :* Of consequence there is Danger alternatively ; lest that which is of God shou'd be ascrib'd to the Devil ; or that which is of the Devil, shou'd be ascrib'd to God.

I cannot, Sir, in the least doubt, from the Character you bear of Integrity, Charity and Piety, but what you have written on this Subject flow'd from a real Concern for the Honor of God, as well as Compassion unto those misled by these late unhappy Delusions. On the other hand, neither ought you to question, but when our Consciences are convinc'd, that we are (as in p. 22.) *agitated and influenc'd, and even under a temporary Possession, by evil Spirits*, we shall readily reject that Commerce and Superintendency with Abhorrence: neither is there any Difficulty to retard our publick and ample Acknowledgment, agreeable to the tenor of that Conviction, since no more shame is like to redound to us thereby, than has already by the Profession of late made; on the contrary, we shou'd, in great measure, be deliver'd from it. 'Tis not however (I presume) your Expectation, that we shou'd publickly own our selves *mov'd and agitated from below* (as you term it in p. 8.) while we are fully persuaded in our Minds, that it is from above, and do give in publick such Reasons for it, as none have yet vouchsaf'd to consider in Print, that I know of. Therefore it astonish'd me to find you affirm in the Preface, that *you thought it needless to refute those Arguments, that have been publish'd, to prove the Divine Mission of these Prophets*. And I cou'd not, I conceive, stand acquitted, even before your self, in renouncing that Proof, with any Sobriety of Mind, without expecting the force of that Confutation, you offer to give, for my Conviction. In the mean time I proceed to examine what you have been pleas'd to give us, in the Treatise under consideration, to induce us to a publick penitent Acknowledgment, and to lay down the Reasons we have, that will not permit our Consciences yet to make the said publick penitent Acknowledgments, you expect from us; tho the expectation is so just, that, on my part, whatever I cou'd do of that kind, without Offence to God, I shou'd esteem it a comely and honorable thing, nor could I enjoy any Peace of Mind without performing it.

I hope you will excuse any Defect in the Method of my treating this Argument, since I am little vers'd in the Rules of controverting, nor desire to be; neither do I think my self bound to answer all that may be written upon this Subject, or now to proceed upon the Terms us'd by Sir R. B. (whose Book you have at large commented upon) but my purpose is to examine the several Conclusions, upon which you have determin'd we are influenc'd and over-rul'd by evil Spirits, and on which you expect our open Acknowledgments of it accordingly. *The Law of God, say you, p. 13. concerning the Trial and Punishment of Prophets, was this: Deut. 18. 20, 21, 22. The Prophet that shall presume to speak a word in my Name, which I have not commanded him to speak, even that Prophet shall die: And if thou say in thy Heart, how shall we know the Word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a Prophet speaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him. Your Inference from that Text is, That the Righteousness of this Sentence of Death on the Prophet, who foretold any thing in God's Name that did not come to pass, is grounded on the Impossibility of his receiving any false thing from God: and therefore they were commanded to execute him, without any fear, in so plain a Case. For, p. 12. our infinitely good God never did, and never can put any false Sentence, into the Mouth of any Prophet.*

In the 20th Verse, you have left out the words (*or that shall speak in the Name of other Gods*) and whether they ought to carry any reference to the Case, wherein the Prophet shou'd die (as it seems to me from Deut. 13. 5—10. they ought) being my self wholly unlearn'd in the original Version, and the Practice of the antient Hebrews in Judicature, I must leave to others. But having no more than the *English* Text to judg. upon, I find there no Instance of a false Prophet, speaking in the Name of God, judicially executed by Men; tho we find the true Prophets throughout the Scripture, treated by that People with numerous

numerous Reproaches, Imputations of not speaking from God, Violences, Imprisonments, Mockings of the Multitude; and our Saviour charges *Jerusalem* with their Blood. I am no ways qualify'd for an accurate Disputant; but in several places, the Punishment of the Prophet seems to me to be reserv'd to the immediate hand of God, who seldom does invest a temporal Judg with the Gift of discerning of Spirits; the sole Enquiry necessary in the point, wherein you have made that Comment on the Text, is, whether any Word really from God, may not fail of coming to pass, in the obvious Sense it had, or could have among Men. This you affirm cannot possibly be, and that God never did, and never can put any such false Sentence, into the mouth of any Prophet, To which I answer.

The incomprehensible, ineffable, holy, and true One, does not need the hand of Man to support his never-failing Veracity, any more than his Ark once did that of *Uzzah*. Where we cannot fully comprehend, we ought still to adore, and with reverential Awe fear to determine concerning him. His Thoughts are not to be measur'd by those of Men, and his Footsteps are often past finding out by them. But in the point before us, you seem to have driven things to a dangerous Issue; as if, whoever denys your Hypothesis, must make God the Author of a Lie, and several such Expressions you have, which make me dread to repeat them: whereas I shall crave leave to be of another Mind, and therein found my self wholly on the Scriptures, without danger, I hope, of incurring any such tremendous Guilt, as you mention unavoidable to ensue.

In the 89th Psalm, the Royal Prophet mentions a Covenant sworn to him by the Holiness of God, that he wou'd not lye unto David; representing there God saying, *With my holy Oyl have I anointed him, the Enemy shall not exact upon him, and I will beat down his Foes before his Face; but my Faithfulness and my Mercy shall be with him.* Yet in the 38th Verse we find David asserting,

ing, in an Appeal to God, *But thou hast cast off and abhorred thine Anointed, thou hast made void the Covenant of thy Servant, thou hast set up the right Hand of his Adversarys, and thou hast made all his Enemyes to rejoyce. Yet no consequence is hence drawn, to the prejudice of the Honor of God; but the Psalmist says notwithstanding, I will sing of the Mercys of the Lord for ever, with my Mouth will I make known thy Faithfulness to all Generations. The whole Psalm ought to be read, and the Temper of it copy'd.*

Jeremiah is frequent in Complaints of this nature; thus in Chap. 4. 10. *Then said I, Ah Lord God, surely thou hast greatly deceiv'd this People, and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have Peace, whereas the Sword reacheth unto the Soul.* Chap. 15. 18. *Why is my Pain perpetual, and my Wound incurable, which refuseth to be heal'd? Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a Lyar, and as Waters that fail?* Chap. 20. 7. *O Lord, thou hast deceiv'd me, and I was deceiv'd; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevail'd. I am in Derision daily, every one mocketh me.* These Expressions do plainly intimate to me, that *Jeremiah* had from God some words, which he utter'd, and were not fulfil'd: and your Comment on two of these Texts does no way satisfy me to the contrary; observing some Defects therein, which I cannot argue, because of my Ignorance of the Original, and Commentators thereon. But the Instance of *Jonah* is yet more express, wherein, tho the time limited of forty Days fail'd in its Accomplishment, and the Prophet thereon charges God in a manner seemingly very insolent; yet, without any Salvo to the Verity of that Prophecy or Message committed to him, we find the Father of Mercys not severe with him; tho by your Determination, he ought to have been put to death, as having utter'd that, which was impossible to be from God.

The words of *Isaiah*, Chap. 38. 1. to King *Hezekiah*, *Thus saith the Lord, set thine House in order, for thou shalt die, and not live;* were certainly of God, tho not, in the sense they were taken, fulfil'd. So in 2 *Kings* 22. 20. the words of the Prophetess *Huldah* to King *Josiah*,

Josiah, Thus saith the Lord, thou shalt be gather'd to thy Grave in Peace, were in the obvious Sense of them fulfill'd, since he died of a Wound receiv'd in Battel, 2 Chron. 35. In like manner, 2 Chron. 18. 13, 14. the words of *Micaiah to Ahab, Go up and prosper, and they (the Syrians) shall be deliver'd into your Hands,* were undoubtedly the words of God, which you grant to be spoken ironically, and thereby allow, that God may speak to Men in what phrase of Expression he pleases to use. So in Gen. 45. God said unto *Jacob, I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again;* yet this in the obvious Sense of the words was not made good, for he died in Egypt. Of the same kind also, are the words of God by *Elisha, sent to Benbadad, 2 King. 8. 10. Go (Hazeal) say unto him, Thou shalt surely live;* which you grant a true rendring of that Text, *Judg. 10. 11, 13. And the Lord said unto the Children of Israel, Ye have forsaken me, and serv'd other Gods, wherefore I will deliver you no more;* yet in the very next Chapter it appears, that *Jephtha* had a Commission from God to deliver them out of the hands of the *Ammonites*. The words of the Man of God, who came to *Eli, in Sam. 2. 30. Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed, that thy House, and the House of thy Father, should walk before me for ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me, &c.* shew, that tho God changeth not in himself, yet his Words ought not to be, by presuming Man, constru'd so as to limit the Almighty. Shall mortal Man be more just than God, in the defining of his Ways and Words? In 2 Kings 13. 17. *Elisha* said unto *Joash, Thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek till thou have consum'd them.* After this positive Declaration in God's Name, *Joash* smiting but three times on the ground, it follows in the 19th Verse, *The Man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consum'd it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.* You will do well, Sir, to reconcile such Passages of the Scripture to your Hypothesis, that no Words of God, in the mouth

of his Prophets, can fail in the Sense of them among Men to be made good, for I confess my self unable to do it.

Our blessed Saviour, the great Prophet, to whom all others pointed, was Wisdom it self, and the Word, who is to be honor'd even as God the Father; I know, Sir, you love him in Sincerity, and yet his Predictions are not to be measur'd, nor ought to be strictly, by the Rule you have laid down: for in the obvious Sense of the words among Men they seem not all to be fulfil'd. John 2. 19—22. *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, was not understood even of the Apostles, till the Holy Ghost's Illumination. Mat. 10. 23. *Ye shall not have gone over the Citys of Israel till the Son of Man be come*; the Accomplishment of which, according to the literal Sense, is difficult to comprehend. Mat. 12. 39, 40. *An evil and adulterous Generation seeketh after a Sign, and there shall no Sign be given it, but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly; so shall the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth*. Now, whether our Lord's Body was more than one Day and two Nights in the Sepulchre, or that Prediction cou'd be any ways strictly fulfil'd, I leave all Men to judg. So likewise 'tis very questionable, whether that was fulfil'd in John 1. 51. *Verily, verily I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*.

From these Observations on the Scripture I do conclude, that a Word really spoken from God, may fail of coming to pass, and has done, according to the obvious Sense it had or cou'd have among Men; and all this without Impeachment of the Veracity of God, whom we ought to adore and bless, according to the Pattern given us by the Patriarch David, tho we cannot fully comprehend his Ways and Words. The Apostles understood not many things, which our Lord spake, yet they believ'd on him as the *Messiah*: and 'tis unaccountable Arrogance, and horrible Impiety

piety therefore in any Men, to reject the Authority of Scripture as the Word of God, because some parts of it are above their depth to fathom; for that amounts to no less, than to measure Infinity by the scanty Standard of their weak Capacitys.

You say, p. 6, 7. that the modern Prophets, according to their own Principles and Declarations, are not from God; because Mr. Lacy had a Promise by two or three Inspirations (he saith) that his Divine Mission shou'd be prov'd, by many unquestionable Miracles, before the 29th of April last; but this was not made good, so as to satisfy himself, as he confesseth: and Sir R. B. publish'd it to the World, that the raising of Dr. Emes's Body from the Grave, on the 25th of May last, shou'd be the determining and deciding Sign, upon which the Truth of these Prophets depended. And in p. 63. you make my words to be, ——— All that was said by my Servant (meaning Mr. Potter) touching the rising from the dead, shall be fulfil'd; but, p. 64. all these Predictions have been disprov'd by the Event, and therefore were not from above, but from beneath.

Sir, after your own Declaration in the Preface, That there is a Charity due to those that are bewildred in a maze of unsober Thoughts, and that you ought to reduce them in the Spirit of Meekness; it is with much regret, that I am under a necessity of taking notice, that in the several Particulars above mention'd, you have misrepresented me. For if you are pleas'd to search the References alledg'd for your Authority, you'll find, I neither did ever say, my Mission shou'd be prov'd by many unquestionable Miracles, before the 29th of April last: nor did I confess what you make me to do; and my words cited in p. 63. were, *All that was said by my Servant, touching the raising from the Dead, shall be printed.* Nevertheless, and tho there are some other Misrepresentations of me in your Book, I take them to be involuntary; and do own, that you have treated us in general, more candidly and like a Christian, than most of the Writers on this Subject: and I take in good part what you have hinted monitory to me, endeavoring to profit my self of it, by the Grace of God.

As to Sir R. B's having publish'd it to the World, that the raising of Dr. *Emes's* Body on the 25th of *May*, shou'd be the determining and deciding Sign, upon which the Truth of these Prophets depended; I can positively assure you, on my part, and upon good Authority, for all those in my condition, that neither I, nor any of them, were consulted by that Gentleman, or knew what he had said in that point, till we saw it in print: therefore his Declaration cannot justly be charg'd upon us, or properly be called ours. Nevertheless, we all firmly believ'd the Inspirations in which the said Prediction was contain'd, to be from God; and so far depended on its Verification (till a little before the day came) that I make no doubt, but many of the Persons professing themselves inspir'd, did, out of the Direction of that Spirit, think within themselves, and express to others, that they wou'd no more yield to the Operation of that Spirit as from God, in case that fail'd. But that said Resolution within themselves, and Expression of it to others (if People will give themselves leave to consider impartially) amounts to no more than what once *Jeremiah* declar'd of himself; even in the same place where he said, *O Lord, thou hast deceiv'd me, and I was deceiv'd; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevail'd*: for in Ver. 9. of Chap. 20. he adds, *Then I said* (that is, in his natural Capacity) *I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name; but his Word was in mine Heart, as a burning Fire shut up in my Bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I cou'd not stay*. So that the Prophetick Influence over-rul'd his own precedent Resolution. What Reasons we have, notwithstanding this signal Instance of our being deceiv'd, to believe still, that the supernatural Agent over-ruling us at times, is from God, and not of the Devil, will be given by and by. That things spoken of God, have not sometimes, according to the obvious Sense, come to pass, has been already shewn. As to the Reasons there may be, in the Eternal Mind and Counsel, of such a Procedure, we say, that what we cannot clearly comprehend, we ought not to decide of. *Jonah* in his Disappointment wish'd to die; and *Jeremiah* under his

Trial,

Trial, cursed the day of his Birth. And tho both those are things inconsistent with due Humility and Resignation; yet the infinitely gracious God, compassionate to the mere Infirmities of fallen Man, dealt tenderly with them in that unjustifiable Behaviour. I must here do Justice to the Persons, who might be suppos'd under the like Temptation of repining, that they have not in it charg'd God foolishly, that I know of; but in meek Submission do solve this dark Cloud upon them, into a part of that unaccountable Circumstance, mention'd in *Zach. 14. 5—9.* And the Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee: and it shall come to pass in that Day, that the Light shall not be clear nor dark; but it shall be one Day, which shall be known to the Lord, not Day nor Night. But it shall come to pass, that at Evening-time, it shall be Light: and it shall be in that Day, that living Waters shall go out from Jerusalem; in Summer and in Winter shall it be: and the Lord shall be King over all the Earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his Name one.

Many are stumbl'd to know the Reasons, that whilst I believ'd the Prediction of Dr. *Emes's* rising on the 25th of *May* to be from God, I did not attend at the Burial-place accordingly: and they are as followeth, I have frequently from others, and myself, had an Order of the Spirit, that what expressly concern'd my personal Conduct, I shou'd expect Direction in from my own Mouth; and have accordingly (as is well known) receiv'd such Direction in sundry Cases of less Importance than this of attending the Grave was: but in the Case before us, I not only wanted such an Order from my own Mouth, but never had from the Spirit so much as an express mention that way, of his rising on the said 25th of *May*. And whereas in the case of my visiting the Sick, I had constantly two Orders at the least, upon Prayer for every one, for my doing so, which made me go in full Faith to them; I cou'd not go on this more important Errand with the same Faith, since upon Prayer I cou'd not obtain any Direction, or an Order
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for it. Moreover, tho this miraculous Resurrection has been several times, without defining the Day, predicted from my Mouth: yet, as very wonderful Providences were in the same manner declar'd to precede it, and much greater than did come to pass before the 25th of May last; this was another Reason why I cou'd not go to the Place, as was expected.

It is with great Satisfaction, Sir, that I read in p. 23, & 24. of your Treatise, *That if these Extasys of the modern Prophets be granted to be from the Deceiver, this cannot be understood to conclude, that God will never give extraordinary Gifts of his Spirit to any in the Christian Church: For it seems to be an Artifice of his, to introduce and nurse up Prejudices against the real Effusions of God's Holy Spirit, when they shall be granted. As just before the coming of our Blessed Saviour, there were many false Christs; so it may be here: Nor does what has been said prove, that all the marvellous things reported to be done in the Cevennes, were from the Spirits of Darkneß; nor doth this cast any Censure on the Devotions of the Children in Silesia, concerning whom we hope that it may please the Fountain of Goodness to revive a Spirit of Devotion and true Piety by these Children, ordaining Strength to his Church out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings. We must thankfully receive all Spiritual Benefits, by all ways that seem good to the Sovereign Dispenser of them.*

Before I give the Reasons, why 'tis not yet in my Power to gratify you and the World, by owning myself the Instrument of Satan to nurse up Prejudices against the real Effusions of God's Holy Spirit; you may please to take notice, that what is befallen in *Silesia*, is pursuant to the Tenor of the Prophetick Voice in *London*, some Months before that began: and the Infancy of the Province of *Silesia* do concurrently with us declare Christ at hand. The same God over all, blessed for ever, can in other Countrys soon raise up Babes and Sucklings to proclaim his Name, even as there; till the whole Earth resound with his Praises, and every Knee bow, and every Tongue confess, that Christ is King, to the Glory of God the Father.

Father. I am satisfy'd you are ready to receive such good news, by all ways that seem good to the Sovereign Dispenser to send it: but 'tis too manifest, that the Clergy in *Silesia* are not in so good a Disposition. On the contrary, I have seen a Mandate or Letter of the Bishop of *Breslaw*, sign'd by many of his Brethren the Clergy, inciting both Ministers and Magistrates, to discountenance the said Assemblys of the Children.

From p. 27. to 44. you have enquir'd, *Whether there be any ground in the Holy Scriptures, to expect another Ministry different from what we now enjoy, before the end of the World.* The Angel's preaching the everlasting Gospel, *Rev. 14. 7.* you interpret, *A powerful Publication of it by the Bishops and Clergy.* In your Discourse upon all which, it was no small Affliction to me, to find you under Misapprehensions touching the present Inspiration; as if this undermin'd and tended to overthrow, what you have shewn to be establish'd by our Blessed Saviour, from *Mat. 28. 20.* and other Texts; to wit, that the Office of a Ministry in Christ's Church is to be coeval with the World. If you please to search into the Warnings publish'd, I am confident you'll find there no ground for that Conclusion: and I am fully satisfy'd, that nothing said under the Operation of this Spirit, unprinted, wou'd bear it neither. If the glorious Gifts of the Holy Ghost were again poured forth, in the Multitude and Variety of them, as in the Apostolick Age; they on whom these were confer'd, wou'd be Servants, Ministers, or Messengers of the most High, tho Children in Age, or weak Women. The Sovereign Dispenser of them may chuse the Subjects, as he pleases, whom he will anoint with that holy Oil. I must crave leave to say, that the gracious Promise of our Saviour, *Mat. 28. 20. Lo! I am with you to the end of the World;* does not seem to me limited and confin'd to the Clergy, exclusive of all others, or to stand in bar against the real Effusions of the Holy Spirit, in his extraordinary Gifts, when, and upon whom he pleases. May it suffice
here;

here to add, that the present Ministers are own'd such, by the Inspiration which you charge to be from the Devil, and expect we shou'd openly acknowledg so. But I crave leave humbly to represent, that in mere Conscience to God we dare not and cannot do it, for the Reasons ensuing; which tho I give mostly in my own Name, are more or less agreeable to the Case of all the rest.

1. Our dear Saviour left, as his last Legacy, Peace to his Followers; and the Holy Ghost brought them Joy, growing and abounding more and more, as outward Sufferings oppress'd them. Whoever then finds a new Peace in his Soul, built on God, and no ways supply'd to him from without; and when, for the sake of his Profession of Christ, manifold Afflictions, numerous Difficultys, cruel Mockings, universal Hatred and Scorn (more than ever was upon any Criminal) are heap'd upon this Man from the World: He finds under all this, a perfect Serenity and Calmness of Mind, with a Joy merely spiritual, unknown to him before in Prosperity, and making him to esteem the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt. While he thus finds within himself an abundant Reward, springing up from the Influence of a superior Agent operating on him; can he call that Agent a Devil, without evident Injury to the Nature of the Holy Ghost; or without casting a blemish upon the like Experience of the Apostles and the first Christians, who urg'd the same, as one Evidence they had of the Holy Ghost in them? But the now Inspir'd do declare, they know and find the Case is so with them, and has been under all their Difficultys, and even under the present great Trial: And as I, for my part, have compleat Satisfaction that it has hitherto been mine; shall I, can I then say, this comes from the Devil? Put it to your own Conscience, Sir; and if the Case were thus with you, cou'd you do it? No; but rather shou'd we say, Blessed be the Father of Mercys, and God of Patience and all Consolation, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ Jesus.

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2. The Holy Ghost is call'd the Spirit of Prayer and Supplication, who manifested himself thereby to the Apostles, and to those whom he fell upon and abode withal, as the inspir'd Writings of that Age abundantly testify. This is so characteristical of the Divine Spirit, especially when it abounds in Doxologys and Praises to the Deity, that there can be little ground to impute this to the Influence of the Devil. Nay pardon me, Sir, I think we can have no greater Evidence of our being Christians. Now that this is the Case of the present Inspir'd in *London*, and of those who receive the preparatory Symptoms of the Spirit, who altogether may probably make 200, there is abundant Proof; such as none can withstand, who are but willing to admit in this Case, what in any other point soever wou'd pass for satisfactory: Were Men but dispos'd to enquire, many will be found of that number, who thro the Imbecillity of their Age, or Defect of their Education, cou'd not pray *extempore* before; and many who had no Disposition to that Duty at all, nor ever practis'd it, do it now by the Urgency and inward Motion of this Spirit. I am witness, of very Infants praying with an Energy, a genuine Power, nay a copious Elegance and moving Force, which cou'd not be infus'd into them by any Instructions, or proceed of their own Abilities. As to the vital Operations of the Soul in such Prayers, it lies not open to the cognizance of others; this Spirit has often severely chid the Person, by whose Mouth he spoke, before an Assembly, of his or her Neglect of secret Prayer. All the Inspir'd do declare, that the Spirit either withdraws or frequents them, with his Visits, as they either omit or heedfully pursue that Duty. God is my Witness, that in secret, where no Eye but his sees, when and as often as I lift up my Heart to him; and the more I do so, the more does this Spirit testify to me his Approbation, and that in various ways, unexpressible in great measure; and which if I shou'd offer to describe, the World is so averse to allow, any immediate Communications from God to others, which they find nothing

of in themselves, that it only draws more Mockery upon the Person relating them. And tho I know this the Consequence, yet as *David* (when his Wife upbraided him for his indecent and unmanly extatick Behavior before the Ark, and for exposing himself thereby to the Scurrility of the People) answer'd her, *It was before the Lord, and I will yet be more vile than thus.* So, to witness for God, let Shame be multiply'd for my Portion among Men, I do declare, that I have often (probably 20 times) being in compos'd devout Meditation, and never else, found something dart or strike upon my Forehead, represented to the Intellect (without any visible Appearance) like a Flash of Fire, which gave a sudden turn to the animal Spirits, and from the Head perceptibly dispers'd it self all over my Body ; which convey'd therewith into my Soul, a reverential Awe, Swavity and Joy inexpressible, purely Divine. The bodily Impressions lasted about 2 minutes, those on the Mind near half an hour. I mention this Particularity as a Digression. But to resume the Argument ; where the Spirit of Prayer is infus'd and convey'd (as abovemention'd) by an adventitious Agent, shall the Receivers of him publicly declare it was a Devil? Sir, you will agree with me, that those who know it to be thus, and whilst they do so find it, cannot gratify you and the World in that Expectation, with the Answer of a good Conscience toward God.

3. The Answers of Prayer to God, were one Evidence which the Apostle gave of his Mission from on High : 1 John 5. 14, 15. *This is the Confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us ; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions that we desir'd of him.* When our Lord told his Disciples he wou'd see them again, and their Heart shou'd rejoice, and their Joy no Man shou'd take from them ; he adds, John 16. 23. *In that Day, whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.* Thus the Prayer of Faith did heal the Sick, and Prayer was enjoin'd the Elders of the Church on that occasion ; and Healing follow'd as an Attestation from Heaven. And the

the blind Man's Assertion, John 9. 31. *Now we know that God beareth not Sinners*, may stand for an indisputable Truth. Nay in the Old Testament throughout, most of the miraculous Works of God were given, in answer of Prayer, to the holy Men of old; upon which Authoritys we build, that the Answers of Prayer are demonstrative of the Approbation of God. Now those that have seen and known, and are able and ready, on due occasion, to bring forty Witnesses, of God answering their Prayers by the Mouth of some, under the Operation of a Spirit; can those Witnesses allow, that the Devil answer'd to their mental Prayers unto God? In other Cases, 40 Witnesses upon Oath wou'd be competent proof, in any point; but those who cannot believe any number in this, let them come and see, and every one then judg by his own Eyes, otherwise he ought not to pretend to judg for those, who know it to be true. Again, I have publish'd some Instances of Relief and Cures, graciously vouchsaf'd to Persons, in answer to Prayer, under the Operation of this Spirit; and I have my self, under acute Pain, been instantaneously heal'd of it, upon a Prayer in like manner: I have had divers Answers, of other kinds, given me by Issues and Events providential, forthwith ensuing. Thus when clear Matters of Fact are produc'd, answering the Prayers made under the Operation of a superior independent Spirit, wou'd you have us ascribe the Glory of it to the Devil? The Consequences to Religion are too dreadful! far be it from you.

4. God has been pleas'd to reveal himself to Man, among divers Manners, in that of Vision so eminently, that it sometimes seems in Scripture figuratively to represent Revelation it self; as in 1 Sam. 3. 1. *The Word of the Lord was precious in those Days, there was no open Vision.* And in Prov. 29. 18. *Where there is no Vision, the People perish.* And God is said to speak to Men in Visions. This was not only remarkable in the Old Testament, but in the New we find many Visions to the Apostles and others: And the Appearance of Angels as ministring Spirits, and Fellow-Servants of

Christ, was frequent in the first Promulgation of the Gospel; and the Canon of the New Testament was clos'd with an entire Book of Visions, which is admitted of equal Authority with the other Books of it, And St. Paul being converted by a Vision, speaks with a peculiar Emphasis of that way of Manifestation, saying; 2 Cor. 12. 1. *I will come to Visions and Revelations of the Lord*: yet he says, whether he was in the Body or out of the Body, when he saw them, he cou'd not tell; so mysterious, even to the Subject of it, is this way of Revelation. All Men know, how great a part of the Scriptures depend upon the Authority of this way of God's revealing himself: yet by the Sadducean, Sceptical and Infidel Temper, even among the religious of this Age, 'tis much to be question'd, whether any Revelation from God can be admitted of in that way; no, nor in any other, if they wou'd speak out: for none of those who deride us are so open-hearted as we are, or will define and tell us plainly, what does amount to competent Evidence of Divine Revelation, tho that were the likeliest means of putting an end to Delusions; and therefore they ought either in Charity to others, and in Zeal for God's Honour, to do it, or desist from endless Cavils upon the Evidence that is brought them. There are about eight or ten of the Inspir'd in London already, who have Visions presented them by this Spirit, some of whom converse with Angels in those Visions, in which also they see the Lips of the Angels move in Discourse, who take the Persons by the hand; and the Subject of all these Visions tends to, and concerns, the approaching glorious Dominion of our Lord on Earth, and the Suppression of the Prevalence of evil Men and Spirits on it. I have already declar'd, that the Visions God has vouchsaf'd me, carry'd in them no discernable Tincture of a foul Spirit, but manifest Indications of a pure and holy one. With what Face therefore we can, before an All-seeing Judg, divulge to the World, that they came to us by a Familiarity with the Devil, I cannot conceive, and of consequence dare not do it; since none of those, who sollicite

us to the same, can secure us against the Wrath of the Almighty, in thus trespassing against our Consciences. 105. The Gift of Languages was the sole one; that we find recorded to attend the visible Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, and thereby seems to have a peculiar Stamp of Divine Communication upon it. There are four or five of our Number, who have receiv'd small Earnests of this Gift; such however as will appear on Examination, to be the real Infusions of that Spirit which moves on us. And surely it becomes us, to fear the imputing of them to the Enemy of our Lord, lest we shou'd offend him whom we profess to honour: Therefore not to build upon it any more, than that it demonstrates the Agency of a Spirit (as obvious to us as the Existence of our own Soul) which in other things shews nothing of diabolical; we add, that this Spirit insisting chiefly and forcibly upon the great Dutys of sincere and fervent Love to God and Men, and drawing all Partys among us into an actual Union, that silences all variance about Party-Opinions, and brings the several Sects into one Bond of Affection under it self, does thereby give us another Instance, wherein it favours not of infernal Qualities, but rather of that holy uniting Spirit, which animated the Primitive Christians; and proceeds of that God, who is Love it self, and the common Center of Union to Men: A Spirit exhorting its Adherers to Self-denial, in worldly Advantages of all sorts, and inducing on them the real Practice of it: A Spirit which takes away the Occasions of Pride in Man, and by various ways of its Operation, tends to abase him thorowly, as is obvious to those who are well acquainted with its Procedure: A Spirit, which gratifys not the particular Corruptions, and sinful Infirmitys of its Followers; but on the contrary, with jealousy reprimanding, puts them upon repeated performance of the opposite Virtue: A Spirit, never injuring the Body where it resides, but often known by its Operations to relieve the incumbent Griefs of it. To those who know these things, and who are conscious of its holy Influence on their Hearts in general; and who appealing

appealing to the omniscient Eye, can say, it has drawn them into stronger Engagements with him: Sir, it is very difficult, and next to impossible for them to own that Spirit for a Devil. And as hitherto I am assur'd of its good Effects abovemention'd, so while they continue witness'd by, and felt in my own Soul, I shall rather incur the Displeasure of all the World than God's, by charging them on the Devil.

I cou'd add, that the general Import of this Prophetick Voice, is consonant to what the holy Men of old spake, when mov'd, over-rul'd or enforc'd by the Holy Ghost: That the Expositions it has given of a multitude of Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, do highly advance the Glory of God on Earth. I cou'd add, that it is the Interest of the Devil to keep the World in a fatal Security, like that it was under in the days of *Noah* and of *Lot*; and as our Saviour said it wou'd be, in like manner, in the day when the Son of Man shou'd be reveal'd. But a Voice alarming and calling aloud to awake, because the Lord is at hand; and thereupon exciting to the same Dutys, which *St. Peter*, in his Epistles, exhorts to from the like Argument, mentioning, that his belov'd Brother *Paul* also had, in all his Epistles, insisted on the same things, does not seem to me to side with the Devil; but whether the revealing of our Lord *Jesus Christ* from Heaven (2 Thess. 1. 6—10.) with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his Gospel, who shall be punish'd with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power, when he shall come to be glorify'd in his Saints, and to be admir'd in all them that believe, in that Day: Whether the Coming of Christ, describ'd by *St. Jude*, and whether the 7 Angels pouring out the Vials of the Wrath of God upon the Earth, as describ'd in *Rev. 16.* and which are mention'd in *Ver. 15.* to be *Christ's Coming as a Thief*: whether, I say, these Scriptures (which carry the summary Import of the present Cry at a time, which is Midnight, as to the Faith of his so coming) can be consistent with the common Doctrine, that there's no other Coming of Christ

Christ to be expected, till the final Dissolution of the World, and general Resurrection of all human Bodies, deserves serious and awful Consideration ; since if there be such a glorious Advent of Christ to precede, then those who assert and teach the contrary, are accessory to produce that Circumstance of his coming as a Thief, in pouring out those Vials of Wrath upon the World. But *blessed is he that watcheth* (against his Coming as a Thief, Rev. 16. 15.) *and keepeth his Garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his Shame.*

And now, instead of enumerating many other concurrent Evidences, which I cou'd readily do, to shew the Characters of this Inspiration, inconsistent with the Imputation of its being from below, and irreconcilable to the Agency of infernal Demons ; I am sensible that 'tis but speaking to the wilfully Deaf, and shewing Colors to the Blind : for, say they, *The Particulars he has recited are but the Parts of a golden Dream, there's nothing in the Facts recounted real ; he hears, and sees, and knows, and finds in his Heart, this, and that, and t'other, but 'tis all Delusion.* So one Answer will ever serve, for matters of this nature ; there needs no more Reasoning, than just to recite the word *Delusion*, for a confutation of all Pretences to a supernatural Discovery from God, tho they can allow it more easily from the Devil. Therefore I shall proceed no further, in respect to others ; but for us, who know the Facts herein recited to be true, they are conclusive, that they can't emerge from the evil One.

Thus, Sir, I have laid before you some of the Arguments, which determine us at present not to make an open Acknowledgment of our Commerce with evil Spirits, notwithstanding the Failure of Predictions, which is urg'd by you as the Reason which shou'd oblige us to it. The reserv'd Secret of God's Counsel, in permitting and appointing so difficult a Trial upon us, and perhaps on others, we know not ; therefore we quietly resign our selves up, and desire patiently to submit to his blessed Will, whatever it may henceforth appear to be touching us. We trust and hope he will compassionate our Weakness, where he discerns Integrity : He knows we cannot gratify you and the World, in
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what is expected of us, without Violence committed on our Conscience of Duty to him: Therefore there remains no more, than earnestly to intreat your Prayers, and those of all good Christians, that he will guide and enlighten our Consciences; which is the more necessary, and in Charity due to us, because the more we pray, the more strongly we are hitherto confirm'd in our present Sentiments.

I do believe God will give more and stronger Evidences of his Work. In the meantime, it becomes us to fear, lest we arm our selves with such Prejudices, that no Demonstrations of Divine Power can take place upon us; for in that Case, the wilful hardning of our Hearts against all equal weighing of things, may provoke God to add judicial Hardness, as in *Pharaoh* and other Instances recorded in holy Writ, it prov'd. We ought not to presume our selves capable of scanning Infinity; he is wonderful in Working, of Wisdom unsearchable, and his Ways often past Man's finding out; therefore it behoves us to watch, more especially in respect to the Subject of Faith before us; for the Day of the Lord, or the Coming of Christ, is represented to be attended with Clouds and thick Darkness, and to fall like a Snare upon the Inhabitants of the Earth: not only the Unbelieving, the Mockers and Abominable will be excluded, but the Secure and Sleeping will be unready and unprepar'd to share in that Kingdom on Earth, which we have, and do pray may come. But leaving the farther Explication of things, beyond our reach at present to fathom, to him who works all things after the Counsel of his own Will, I can assure you, no Difference in Judgment, in the Points abovemention'd, does alter the Esteem I ever had of your Piety and Zeal for God's House; which latter, when genuine, does eat up a Man's self, instead of the false one that furiously devours others. And that you and I, with every good Christian, may be more and more weak and base in our own Sight, is the Prayer of,

Your sincere Servant, Well-wisher and Friend,

July 6. 1708.

F I N



J. L.